

As a Nation, we must continue our commitment to eliminating violence and to strengthening children and families. To that end, we have launched initiatives to encourage the use of school uniforms, the adoption of curfews, and the intensification of anti-truancy programs. And we have also expanded the drug-free school program to include anti-crime efforts as well, enhancing the overall safety of our schools.

America's future rests with healthy children and strong families. All across this land—within our homes and health care settings; our churches and communities; our schools and child care centers; our legislatures and halls of justice; our factories, shops, and offices—we are all charged with the responsibility to safeguard our legacy by protecting and nurturing the bodies, minds, and spirits of our children.

To emphasize the significance of fostering children's healthy development, the Congress, by joint resolution approved May 18, 1928, as amended (36 U.S.C. 143), has called for the designation of the first Monday in October as "Child Health Day" and has requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Monday, October 7, 1996, as Child Health Day. On that day and every day throughout the year, I urge all Americans to renew and deepen their commitment to protecting our most precious natural resource—our children.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6934 of October 9, 1996

Leif Erikson Day, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Leif Erikson Day commemorates the life and the voyages of the great Nordic explorer who first set foot on the fertile soil of North America about one thousand years ago. On this day, we also celebrate the close bonds of friendship between the people of the United States and the Nordic peoples, as well as the outstanding contributions that Nordic Americans have made to our country.

We have good cause to mark this day. The pioneering spirit that Leif Erikson and his followers demonstrated embodies the virtues of independence, self-determination, and initiative that are firmly rooted in our national consciousness today. As a vital transatlantic bridge between the continents of America and Europe, the Nordic countries of Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland have repeatedly shown a bedrock commitment to the democratic values that contributed greatly to the formation of our own national ideals.

Just as our forebears persevered through what sometimes seemed insurmountable odds to transform adversity into prosperity, we have contin-

ued to champion the cause of liberty and to reach out without reservation or hesitation to our neighbors and those in need around the world. The same heritage that enabled our ancestors to brave wars and uncharted frontiers—because they were convinced that they were working to create a better world—also emboldens us today in our cooperative effort to integrate the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Western community of nations.

Our immigrant ancestors survived unthinkable hardships to achieve economic, religious, and political freedom. Their dreams were big, but so was their willingness to work for them. The link they forged across the oceans is sustained today by a common commitment to freedom and the rule of law—ideals that have strong roots in the civic and legal traditions of Nordic countries dating back at least to medieval times.

In honor of Leif Erikson—son of Iceland, grandson of Norway—the Congress, by joint resolution approved on September 2, 1964 (Public Law 88-566), has authorized and requested the President to designate October 9 of each year as “Leif Erikson Day.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 9, 1996, as Leif Erikson Day. I encourage the people of the United States to observe this occasion with appropriate ceremonies and activities commemorating our rich Nordic-American heritage.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6935 of October 10, 1996

National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Few losses are more difficult to face than the death of a young person. Such deaths are even more appalling when they result from violence by another youth. It is a tragedy of modern American life that thousands of our young people each year suffer deadly violence initiated by their peers. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) data show that in the decade between 1984 and 1993 the number of homicide arrests of juveniles skyrocketed by 168 percent. Even more disturbing, the fastest increase in violent crime arrests of juveniles occurred among children 10 to 12 years old. Demographic experts predicted that, if those trends continued, juvenile violent crime arrests would double by the year 2010.

Now, new FBI data show reason for cautious optimism. For the first time in 7 years, the juvenile crime arrest rate decreased—by 2.9 percent in 1995. In addition, juvenile arrests for murder declined by 15.2 percent in 1995—the largest 1-year decrease in more than 10 years.